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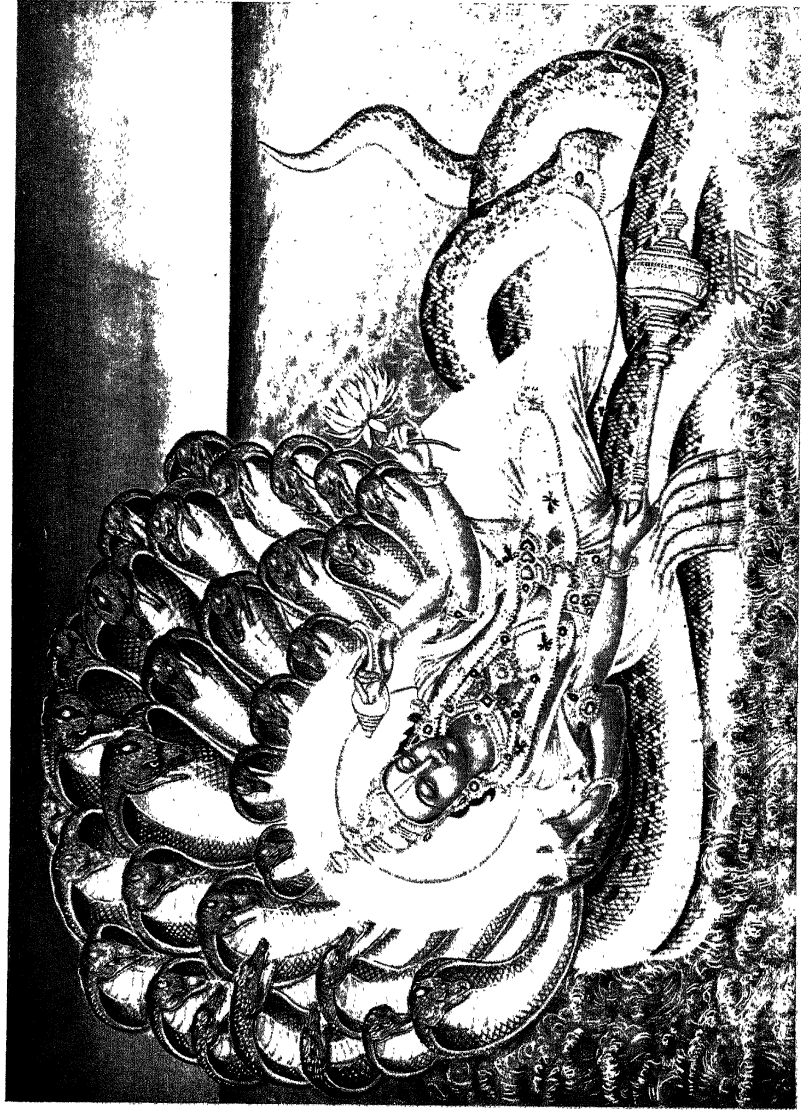
Reposing on the thousand-headed Ś

: पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

**He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me,**
**Of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.**

( *Bhagavadgītā* VI. 30 )

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क्षीरसागरतरङ्गसीकरासारतारकितचारुमूर्तये ।
भोगिभोगशयनीयशायिने माधवाय मधुविद्विषे नमः ॥

( *Mukundamālā* )

"Obeisance to Lord Mādhava, the Slayer of Madhu, whose azure Form looks most captivating when hemmed round by glittering stars in the shape of drops flying from the dashing waves of the Milk-ocean, and, who reclines on the soft coils of Śeṣa, the serpent-god, as His bed."

# Unto Bliss

Remember: there are three kinds of delight in this world—(1) the delight of transgression, (2) the delight of sense-gratification, and (3) the delight of godliness. Each of these can be further divided into many varieties. A vile man revels in error, a voluptuary wallows in sensuality and a true aspirant or devotee indulges in the delight of godliness.

Remember: error consists in neglecting an obligatory duty and doing a thing which ought not to be done, relinquishing noble acts prescribed in the scriptures, enjoying others' wealth or wife and reviling others, are examples of such error. The delight one experiences in such things is, therefore, known as the delight of error or transgression.

Remember: transgression is a terrible intoxicant. The mind or reason of a man involved in error sees everything just the reverse of what it actually is. It recognizes virtue as sin, and sin as virtue; good as evil and evil as good; righteousness as unrighteousness and unrighteousness as righteousness. Hence he naturally commits novel sins with great zeal and zest and feels proud and exalted at heart on having done so. That is why error has been spoken of as an inebriating spirituous liquor or wine. The good, therefore, lies in abjuring error all at once.

Remember: to get deeply engrossed in worldly objects such as one's wife, husband, son, wealth, body, house, fame, honour and prestige etc. which are not tainted with sin and which are consistent with the scriptural injunctions, and to experience joy while associating with them day and night is termed as the delight of sense-gratification. Though it is not sinful, it does involve forgetfulness of God which constitutes disregard or neglect about the ultimate goal of human existence. There is, therefore, every possibility of such delight lapsing into the delight of transgression. Hence it is worth discarding for a seeker after Truth.

Remember: the delight of godliness consists in performing all one's prescribed duties, whether high or low, imposed by one's social order and stage in life, such as sleeping and waking, eating and drinking, earning and spending money, doing business or service, serving one's country or religion, begging alms and living in forest, procreating and bringing up children, observing perfect continence, practising Devotion, austerity and concentration of mind, pursuing the Yoga of Disinterested Action and Knowledge and other spiritual disciplines and, when essential, even performing actions involving wild excitement, without attachment and seeking for fruit, nay, for the pleasure of God alone—as an act of worship to Him, and with one's thought constantly fixed on God and while observing the laws of Universal Religion or Mānava Dharma as it is called, and in experiencing incomparable joy in thus worshipping God through the performance of one's legitimate duties accompanied with God-remembrance.

Remember: it is this delight of godliness alone a man should indulge in. The thirst and insatiety of those who are fond of such delight increases all the more as they go on drinking this cup of divine delight. Before this delight of

godliness, however, all other delights lose their charm. Indeed, the delight of sense-gratification turns absolutely vapid and sordid and the delight of transgression cannot even enter his mind. That is why the conflagration of worldly sufferings is extinguished for them once for all. And even though thirsting for the delight of godliness, they become perfectly happy.

Remember: even the delight of sense-gratification, though appearing attractive at first sight, ultimately proves baneful as poison and drags one into the cycle of metempsychosis, not to say of the delight of error which is outright deadly venom. But, alas, at present the majority of the people in this world are found weltering in the delight of transgression! That is the reason why the world has become a hotbed of so many sufferings, torments and hardships, which are multiplying day by day.

Remember: to dream of enjoying real peace and happiness so long as your life is steeped in error, is to indulge in the vain hope of getting coolness while sitting close to a blazing fire.

Remember: true, undying and absolute bliss or delight, which is perennial, pure and sweet, is found in Śrī Bhagavān alone, because Śrī Bhagavān Himself is real delight personified—'रसो वै सः'.

"Śiva"

( *Kalyan* )

# An Illuminating Discourse*

—By Jayadayal Goyandka

I am going to discuss a fundamental principle, which is both subtle and valuable. When I allot a time for everybody present here to put questions to me, anyone who comes forward and asks me something is perfectly justified and within his rights in doing so. If a third party interrupts him, his interference would be altogether unjustified and uncalled for. When, however, a regular discourse is going on in its natural flow and anyone tries to interrupt me with a question I myself check him and request him to note down or keep in mind his question and ask it only at the end of the discourse, otherwise the chain of his thought would be broken. Interruption by anybody during a discourse is unwarranted and against all decorum. That is why a request is made to desist from such interruption.

* Every year a religious congregation or Satsanga is held at Rishikesh ( Dehradun ), near the banks of the sacred Gangā from Chaitra to Āṣāḍha or April to July approximately. Hundreds of men and women come to attend it from distant places. Śrī Jayadayal Goyandka and Swami Ramasukhadasji deliver their edifying discourses almost everyday; besides them some other enlightened souls also speak on spiritual and religious subjects. From dawn till late at night the discourses go on one after another in a regular swing. The programme is so arranged that barring the unavoidable intervals for bath, Sandhyā and meals, the whole time may be spent in listening to the discourses, doing Japa ( repetition of the Divine Names ) and meditation, intellection and reflection. On the last day of the congregation held this year Śrī Jayadayal Goyandka gave an illuminating and most instructive discourse before the gathering assembled there. The same is being reproduced here.

The subtle point to be grasped here is that, during a time allotted for questions, if anybody asks a question which sounds undesirable to another, the latter should bear with it, and failing that he should leave the place and withdrawing to another place should devote this time to doing Nāma-Japa and meditation. I am master of my own time and you are master of yours. If I recognize everybody's claim on me, how can a particular individual treat me as his or her monopoly? Judging from this point of view, everyone is at liberty to ask me any question he likes.

It may be urged here: "My relations with you are more cordial, I claim to be your follower; while other people are strangers to you, they are foreign to your spirit and hence waste your time." My reply to such an objection is this: "If you are my friend, you should concur with me when I allow all to ask me questions. My pleasure should be yours. You should fall in with my views. If I patiently lend my ear to somebody, you should also join with me." If, however, you still insist that I can tolerate such things while you cannot, in that case you can easily quit the place and sit elsewhere. If at this you urge that your time has been wasted, the answer I should give is that if you think it is wasted then it is surely wasted. After hearing such a large volume of discourses for so many years have you arrived at this one conclusion that one should only listen to things that are to one's liking? If so, you have not arrived at a right conclusion. Again, how many good things you have heard of till now and how many of them have you practised in your life? Had you put into practice all those things you could have been redeemed by this time. It is just possible the questioners may translate the good things they hear of into practice; under such circumstances how can one be justified in stopping them from asking questions? If they put into practice what they hear, they can turn even more deserving than you.

Those who want to listen to my independent talk but cannot do so on account of some one asking me a question lose nothing by keeping mum, because I am conscious of what they want. I shall make the most of the time which is left at my disposal after the question hours. And if I think the questioner is not a desirable person I would check him myself. That you should intervene and stop him shows you are wiser than anybody here.

If you ask what you should do under such circumstances, I would suggest that you should take whatever happens, as a pastime or dispensation of the Lord and be happy. If you urge that you lack that degree of faith, even then, I submit, you should sacrifice your own time for the good of others. Anybody whom we think wiser than ourselves must be unquestioningly obeyed. By doing so we shall not be the losers. If, however, we think otherwise, we clearly deem ourselves wiser. All these things are most vital, subtle and fundamental truths.

Now, I tell you another fundamental truth by citing my own case by way of an illustration as below. Suppose A accords me special honour by offering adoration, waving lights round me and so on. B administers to my bodily comforts but does not offer worship to me like A. C follows my example and D conducts himself according to my

instructions. Of these four persons there can be no doubt about the redemption of the man who spends his life as I tell. For, whatever I say is based on the teachings of sacred books, like the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā*, and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. I simply reproduce what is taught therein. The *Gītā* is the word of the Lord Himself; the Vedas are not the work of any individual; while the works of the sages embody the utterances of God-realized souls. We look upon them as ideal. Our good, yours as well as mine, lies in conducting ourselves according to the precepts contained in these sacred books. If our life is moulded according to them, no room for doubt is left about our redemption. I can vouch for it. I feel no hesitation in saying this, because my words have the authority of the scriptures. I say nothing of my own. Goswami Tulasidas too speaks in a similar strain when he says:—

> "Tulasidas stands answerable to him who fails to attain to Śrī Hari even after adhering to the three vows of speaking the truth, submission and looking upon another's wife as one's mother." *

Tulasidas stands security in this case only because he is repeating the words of the Vedas and other scriptures. If, on the other hand, he said that by doing service to him one could realize God, then there was nothing worth taking notice of. He was confident of his own words, the truth of which he himself had realized. Hence his utterance is quite reasonable and sound.

If I say anything personal, and declare that by doing bodily service to me you shall attain blessedness, it would be undesirable and vainglorious on my part. Only the Lord, who is ever liberated, can speak like that. I am only an ordinary mortal, born into this world according to my previous record of Karma and according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in me. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*:—

> "The four orders of society ( viz., the Brahman, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra ) were created by Me classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; though the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord, to be a non-doer." ( IV. 13 )

You and I as all human beings are made to appear in this world by force of our past Karma and the mode of Prakṛti predominant in us. But the Lord is above all these. He Himself says in the *Gītā*:—

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

( IV. 6 )

> "Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamāyā ( divine potency ), keeping My Nature ( Prakṛti ) under control."

The Lord alone can say like this. You and I cannot speak in this strain. That is why He further says:—

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥

( IX. 34 )

> "Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and make obeisance to Me; thus linking yourself with Me and entirely depending on Me; you shall come to Me."

* सत्य बचन, आधीनता, परतिय मातु समान ।
इतनेमें हरि ना मिलें तो तुलसीदास जमान ॥

How can a mortal say like that ? Hence the best thing is to conform oneself to the talks that are given here on the authority of the Vedas, Smṛti texts, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, the *Gītā*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and so on.

If you carry out the humble request and submission that I make to you, I shall feel much obliged to you. I shall take it an obligation from you. You may urge here that if you put into practice all that I say the benefit will be yours; in that case no question of doing any favour to me arises. My reply to you is that I give this talk to you only when you came to hear me. Whatever I submit to you just strikes my head and then it enters my mind; thence it comes to my tongue in the form of speech which you hear. Your mind then receives and finally your reason comprehends it. In other words, what is conceived by my intellect passes through five channels before it reaches your intellect. All that is conceived by my intellect cannot be wholly grasped by my mind and that which is grasped by the mind cannot be adequately expressed by the tongue. And what is conveyed to you through speech your ear does not catch it all; for your mind often runs away during the discourse. And whatever is listened to is not entirely remembered. And, lastly, all that is remembered is not assimilated by reason. Nevertheless, when the listener is benefited the speaker, it can be easily realized, would naturally be benefited all the more. I am, therefore, quite justified in saying that I feel indebted to you; for it is you who have been instrumental in stirring up these thoughts in me. Had you not been here I could not have talked to this banyan tree here.

Secondly, I can have my commission, if I so choose, for what I submit to you; but in the absence of an audience no such possibility remains. For this reason also I am indebted to you. If you ask me how I can be free from this debt, my answer is that I can be acquitted of this debt only when the object for which you came here is realized. But your aim in coming over here is the redemption of your soul, which is beyond my power. God alone can discharge my debt by redeeming you all. For it is a common practice that when a man's liabilities become inordinately heavy and he is unable to discharge them, he seeks the protection of Government who then manage to repay his creditors out of his assets a percentage of their dues. The Lord, however, is omnipotent and therefore pays off in full the debts of a man who surrenders himself to Him.

I cannot guaranty the redemption of a man who follows my ways of living; for some acts of mine are good and others bad. All my acts are not conducive to blessedness. I could have guarantied his redemption if my acts had illustrated the following verse of the *Gītā*:—

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

(III. 21)

"For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same."

We find in the Upaniṣads the Āchārya or the preceptor imparting the following instruction to his pupil at the end of the latter's academic career:—

वेदमनूच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति । सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः । आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य

प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः। सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम्। धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम्। कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम्। भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम्। स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम्। देवपितृकार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम्। मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव। आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव। यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि। तानि सेवितव्यानि। नो इतराणि। यान्यस्माकँ सुचरितानि। तानि त्वयोपास्यानि। नो इतराणि।

(*Taittirīya-Upaniṣad, I. XI. 1-2*)

"............Speak the truth. Practise virtue. Do not neglect the study of the Vedas and other scriptures. Fetching the desired wealth for the teacher, take a wife, do not cut off the thread of the family line. Let there be no disregard for truth. Let there be no neglect of duty. Let there be no neglect of pious acts. Let there be no neglect of means conducive to your prosperity. Let there be no neglect of your study of the Veda nor of its teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties towards the gods and the manes. Let the mother be a god to you. Let the father be a god to you. Let the teacher be a god to you. Let the guest be a god to you. Works which are irreproachable ought to be performed by you—not any other. All our good deeds ought to be followed by you—not any other."

When such celebrated Āchāryas (religious teachers) speak in this strain, how can I assert that all my acts are commendable and that by following them you can attain blessedness? It would be too presumptuous on my part to make such an assertion. Of course, if somebody imitates any of my doings that appear to him as consistent with the scriptures I shall feel much obliged to him.

I cannot vouch for the redemption of a man who serves me and administers to my bodily comforts either; for his grade is even lower than that of the former. I am no doubt beholden to him for his services inasmuch as I do not serve him in return. All the same no assurance can be given to him for his liberation. Certainly should he also imitate my commendable acts he may be amply rewarded for that. But it cannot be said a man shall attain God-Realization by doing service to me.

As for a man who is inclined to eat my leavings, offer worship to me and wave lights round me, meditate on me, take dust from under my feet and lave my feet etc. does put a slur upon me. Such conduct on his part is most repugnant and unfair to me and unjustified. Hence I take serious exception to it and vehemently denounce it. Anyone who does so brings harm not only to himself and to me but to the world at large and therefore paves the way to hell. For such action on his part creates a very bad impression on others; they conclude that unless I consented to their doing so they could not offer me worship etc.

Leaving alone the last-mentioned person I feel indebted to all the other three persons.

Now I should like to discuss some very important and vital things because the brethren who have been here, would be soon leaving for home. They should first grasp these truths themselves and practise them and then disseminate them among others. For he alone who follows a truth can propagate it. He who does not practise it can make no impression on others. What is wholesome to us must be equally wholesome to all; therefore good things must be popularized,

Hence a few principles that are enunciated below should first be followed by all and then propagated among others. They are as follows:—

1. A man should try his level best to remember God at all times, that is, he should make up his mind to remain God-conscious every moment as far as possible and not forget Him deliberately any moment. This is the very first principle to be followed. It will be much better if repetition of the Lord's Name and meditation on His being are carried on together. Japa may be carried on either with the tongue or with every act of respiration and the meditation with the mind or both can be practised with the mind.

If one cannot practise Japa and meditation together, practising either of them is good. The practice should be carried on all through one's life. If it is urged: "What is the necessity of continuing the practice after one has realized God during one's lifetime?" I should submit that even after one has reached such a blissful state one should carry on the practice in the interest of the world or for the good of others. In reality one who has realized God cannot give up this practice. Those who do so are but self-centred and should, therefore, be regarded as not having realized God. Realized souls, as a matter of fact, work for the welfare of the people with their body, mind and resources.

2. Women should look upon all men, other than their husband, as their father or brother and even so men should treat other's wife as their own mother or sister. Special effort should be made in this direction. One can commit adultery even through mind or eyes; if ever one finds oneself guilty of such a crime, one should condemn oneself and mentally taking refuge in God should pray to Him with sobriety. In other words, when lust and anger and other internal enemies assail the mind, one should call out to God for help. By invoking His help in this way evil impulses like those of lust and anger are subdued, even as at the cry of 'Police, Police' burglars and dacoits, that have slipped into a house, run away. This has been corroborated by experience.

3. If you think it worthwhile, all the members of your family should get together every day in the morning as well as at night in your own house and take up according to your convenience the regular study of the *Gītā*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Bhāgavata*. You should make an effort in this direction, no matter if it is done even for half an hour. This practice is very useful. Anyone who is educated and has some knowledge of these scriptures should read; while all the rest should listen. At home the people should listen, as far as possible only from a member of their own family. Similarly, it is better to instal an idol of the Lord and worship it in one's own house; it is better than to visit a temple and worship the Deity there. In a temple we cannot worship, offer food etc. to and wave lights round the Deity with our own hands; but in our own house we can do so. Hence the worship carried on in our own house is more valuable. Again, mental worship is more valuable than worship done with the body because during mental worship even our mind cannot afford to flicker about. Moreover, in some temples, where the priest does not possess a good moral

character, impediments of many kinds come in the way. Such a thing does not happen in one's own house. It is for this reason that worship done in one's own house has been pronounced as more valuable. You may ask me whether I myself do worship with my own hands because only the female members of my house are found engaged in worship. Although I should not make any answer to this question, it is submitted that I do mental worship.

4. One should perform Balivaiśwadeva, *i. e.*, offer morsels of cooked food to gods, semi-divine beings, spirits, men, birds and other animals, as well as to the fire before meals every day. This is a symbolic way of feeding the whole universe. It is a most commendable practice and does not involve any considerable expense*.

5. Early in the morning after quitting one's bed one should bow at the feet of all one's elders in the house. While enumerating the austerities of the body, the Lord declares the above practice as the first and foremost duty:—

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥
( XVII. 14 )

"Worship of gods, the Brahmans, *one's elders* and wise men, purity, straightness, continence and harmlessness—this is called bodily penance."

Those of you who are not doing it should commence it on returning to your respective homes. Your example will inspire your children and other people to do likewise.

6. As you have taken a vow to practise Japa of the Divine Name with the help of a rosary, you should certainly redeem it and should also persuade the other members of your family to take a similar vow. Similarly, such members of your family as are invested with the sacred thread and yet do not perform Sandhyā or Gāyatrī-Japa must be prevailed upon to commence them—the elders through humble entreaties and the youngsters through loving exhortations.

7. I spoke yesterday about the propagation of the *Gītā* among the people. The Lord Himself proclaims in the *Gītā*:—

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥
न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥
( XVIII. 68-69 )

"He who, offering the highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the *Gītā* among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it. Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me on the entire globe than he."

When I went through the *Gītā* and read these verses therein I was deeply impressed with the idea that the preaching of His Gospel was most dear to the Lord and the thought of propagating it came to my mind even then. Hence you also should do your level best to disseminate the gospel of the *Gītā*, among the people while practising devotion to the Lord.

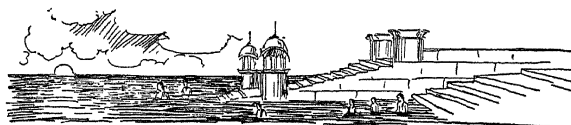
* A printed form containing the method of performing this rite can be had from the Gita Press at Gorakhpur.

8. You must not resort to lying, deception and thieving for earning your livelihood. God is the sustainer of all without exception. Even if you meet your death while performing your duties you will not be a loser; rather you will gain much. Suppose, one cannot get food by righteous means, and by refusing to resort to unlawful means one has to starve to death, even death in such circumstances will be a blessing to us; for we shall be dying for righteous cause. The Lord says:—

> "One's own duty, though devoid of merit is preferable to the duty of another well performed. Even death in the performance of one's own duty brings blessedness; another's duty is fraught with fear." ( *Gītā* III. 35 )

9. Error in the shape of lickerishness, dandyism, love of ease and luxury, self-indulgence, error in the shape of doing what ought not to be done and neglecting what ought to be done, indolence, procrastination, over-sleep and drowsiness and other forms of sloth; evil propensities like lust and passion, greed and infatuation, arrogance and jealousy, attachment and aversion, sinful acts like telling a lie, practising fraud, deception, thieving and adultery; and evil addictions like visiting theatres and cinema houses and frequenting clubs, using intoxicants like Bhāng and smoking and sleeping during day-time—all these should be abjured once for all like poison.

10. Virtues such as forgiveness, compassion, composure, even-mindedness, contentment, self-knowledge, dispassion, straightness and humility; commendable practices like performing sacrifices, making gifts, penance, studying the scriptures, observing a vow of continence, resorting to sacred places, undertaking sacred vows and observing fasts, ministering and doing good to others, and Devotion to the Lord in the form of hearing, singing and ruminating on the Lord's Names, the praises of His beauty, sports, virtues, glory, truth and mysteries and also doing worship and making obeisance to His images and so on—these should be adopted.

By cultivating the last of these, viz., Devotion to God, evil propensities and immoral practices, error, sloth, self-indulgence and evil addictions, sufferings and evil impulses, all disappear, and noble virtues and pious conduct come to take their place of their own accord. If man fails to do anything else, he should at least always mutter the Lord's Name with his thought fixed on His Being. Through the practice of Japa and meditation alone all this can be automatically achieved and one can enjoy supreme peace and bliss after attaining the Lord. Therefore the sovereign practice of remembering the Lord's Name and Form should always be adhered to. ( *Kalyan* )

# Sabari

By Chandrasekhara Iyer

A true Bhakta's pull made Lord Śiva manifest Himself before an illiterate hunter and he became by the Lord's grace a prince among Bhaktas. The reference is to the story of Kaṇṇappa and Śrī Kālahastīśwara, which is found in the *Skandapurāṇa* and which is immortalized in the famous Śaivite shrine at Śrī Kālahastī in the Chittoor district of the Madras State. While Śiva's temple is at the bottom of a hill, Kaṇṇappa's shrine is on the top. Similar is the incident relating to Śabarī, the unlettered maid-servant of sage Matanga and his disciples. She has become illustrious in the array of Bhaktas by the hospitality she showed to Śrī Rāma and the grace that He showered upon her. It may be doubted whether Śrī Rāma enjoyed the royal opulence and splendour of Janaka's court and the lavish dinner of Bharadwāja more than the sweet fruits and pure water offered to Him by Śabarī. The fruit-selling damsel in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* wanted riches from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in exchange for her fruits. The Kubjā ( hunchback ) wanted His touch. Śabarī was not of this type. She yearned for salvation and postponed the fulfilment of her desire only for the purpose of having a sight of the Lord in the shape of Śrī Rāma. Having secured this, she departed from this world in a blazing flame of fire.

We have fallen very much from our spiritual greatness. Simple, unsophisticated, artless lives full of devotion to the paths of virtue, truth and Dharma are fast becoming relics of the past. Even our women are getting into the grip of ideas and ideologies which are unsuited to Indian conditions and which threaten to undermine the very fabric of Hindu society. Customs and usages of foreign countries, however attractive, are not necessarily good for us. All that glitters is not gold. Institutions intended for the promotion of social welfare and progress may have to be conceived and worked here on different lines from elsewhere. Even in the matter of education, variations have to be recognized and faced. It is essential always to bear in mind the genius of the race when we seek to build up the nation. The famous fur coat illustration of Lord Morley still holds good as a warning when we are making experiments, not only in the political field but in other spheres as well. In the onrush of new theories and our pet likes for a new order of things as compared with the old order, we are likely to lose sight of certain fundamental realities and values. We are apt to disregard the older folk among Indian women, who have had no school or collegiate education according to modern concepts, as old-fashioned, useless and burdensome to society. There can be no greater mistake. Illiteracy may go hand in hand with a high degree of culture; in fact, what we were taught in our younger days by our mothers and grand-mothers and aunts has stood us in good stead much more than the book knowledge that we have been able to absorb in present-day education; and this is largely because there was in them no divorce between precept and example and they lived what they taught.

Though she belonged to a hill tribe and was illiterate, Śabarī serves as a striking example of a woman who attained the highest bliss by her service to her masters, devotion to her duties and faith in the Lord. It seems as though this episode has been purposely introduced into the Rāmāyaṇa by the poet to impress upon his countrymen and countrywomen the need for the development of these qualities if we are to become great.

Śabarī probably came of the hunter-tribe known as Śabara. She was a servant attached to the hermitage of Matanga Maharṣi on the banks of the Pampā. Not only did she show exemplary devotion but by association with the sage and his disciples she progressed in her own penances and austerities to such an extent that her fame appears to have travelled far beyond the confines of the hermitage. It is rather remarkable that it is the demon Kabandha who asked Śrī Rāma to see the great lady Śabarī in the course of His search for Sītā, when he indicated to Rāma the route He should take to reach Ṛṣyamūka mountain where Sugrīva was a refugee, whose help He should seek for recovering Sītā. In describing the greatness of Matanga's hermitage, he refers to Śabarī in these words:—

तेषामद्यापि तत्रैव दृश्यते वनचारिणी ।<br>
श्रमणी शबरी नाम काकुत्स्थ चिरजीविनी ॥<br>
त्वां तु धर्मे स्थिता नित्यं सर्वभूतनमस्कृतम् ।<br>
दृष्ट्वा देवोपमं राम स्वर्गलोकं गमिष्यति ॥

"There can be seen in the midst of those very ascetics even to this day, O Rāma, a hermitess, Śabarī by name, who lives in that forest and is pretty long-lived. Ever abiding in Dharma, she will depart to heaven after seeing You, who are shining like gods and are adored by all living beings."

This gives us an idea of the enormous respect in which she was held even by people who led evil and wicked lives. When the time came for the disciples of Matanga to leave this world, Śabarī wanted to accompany them. But they told her: "Not yet, dear lady. You have something more to do. Śrī Rāma and His brother will be passing through this Āśrama. Hospitality has to be shown to them. You should receive them in a befitting manner and after taking leave of them you may join us." With such a tribute paid to a woman of the wild folk by a cruel Rākṣasa like Kabandha, Śrī Rāma must have been very anxious indeed to meet this extraordinary Tapaswinī ( ascetic woman ).

When they reached Matanga's hermitage, Śabarī's joy exceeded their own. She fell prostrate at the feet of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and washed their feet in the ordained manner. Rāma questioned her: "Have you overcome all obstacles in the way of your penances ? Have your austerities increased day by day ? Have you controlled all the senses ? Is your mind in peace ? Have your services to your Gurus become fruitful ?" Her answer was simple and direct: "After Your Darśan, O Lord, there is nothing more for me to achieve. By beholding Thee, my eyes have become blessed." Thereafter, she tells Him how her masters insisted that she should stay behind till His arrival and receive Him. Gently and softly, as a person very inferior in social status would talk to one infinitely his superior, she tells Him that

for a number of days she had gathered fruits from the forest for His use. Rāma partook of the meagre dishes with as much delight as He would have partaken of a rich feast, making it clear to her that her inferior birth did in no way count or matter. There is a slight variation in the *Padmapurāṇa* about this offering of fruits. It is there stated that Śabarī was so anxious that Rāma should not taste any but the sweetest that she bit them herself before giving them to Rāma and that Rāma ate them without the slightest compunction.

Hospitality being over and the time for her departure having come, Śabarī asked Rāma's permission to leave, which given, she lit up a fire and walked into it. In their sight, she became transformed into a radiant form bedecked with garlands and jewels and disappeared into the clouds to join her masters. In the last stanza of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta*, the poet, Līlāśuka prays to the Lord to show him the same affection that He showed to Śabarī. No apology is necessary for quoting the verse here:—

या प्रीतिर्विदुरार्पिते मुररिपो कुन्त्यर्पिते यादृशी
या गोवर्धनमूर्ध्नि या च पृथुके स्तन्ये यशोदार्पिते ।
भारद्वाजसमर्पिते शबरिकादत्तेऽध्वरे योषितां
या प्रीतिर्मुनिपत्निभक्तिरचितेऽप्यत्रापि तां तां कुरु ॥

"O Murāri ( Slayer of the demon Mura )! pray, taste this humble offering of mine as fondly as you did the frugal fare served by Vidura, the simple dishes ( by Nanda and the other cowherds of Vṛndāvana ), the parched rice ( brought by Sudāmā from his home ), the milk flowing from Yaśodā's breasts, the entertainment provided by the sage Bharadwāja, the fruits offered by Śabarī,……and the dainties supplied by the wives of the Brahman priests of Mathurā."

What is the moral of this story very deftly introduced into the Rāmāyaṇa by sage Vālmīki ? It seems to be this. However poor, humble and low a person may be born, be he or she of the most inferior caste as caste is ordinarily understood, spiritual progress, after a certain level is reached, overrides worldly distinctions. God-realized souls are a class by themselves. True devotion to God enables one to overcome social barriers imposed by birth or status. When devotion, whatever form it may take, such as loyal service to masters or constant contemplation of God, reaches perfection, the whole world gazes with wonder on such beings, and even the Lord descends to the earth to take them back into His bosom. Birth in a particular community or caste or race may not be a matter of accident but the product of destiny, which again is nothing else than the result of one's own free will in past lives; but it could be transcended in the process of spiritual progress and evolution. How we use our given opportunities is in our hands. If we use them well, we will climb higher and higher to the summits of bliss. If, on the other hand, we do not strive to progress, a static state is not possible and we shall have to slide down lower and lower to the valleys. There is no use grumbling at what we are, blaming destiny as if it is something apart from oneself and is not the result of one's own past actions. The Divine dwells within us. The manifestation of the Divine within us must be the earnest endeavour of all seekers of truth and salvation.

# The Indian Way: Philosophy *

By R. N. Dandekar

The soul of India is essentially philosophical. Philosophy pervades, as it were, every tiny detail of common activity of the average man and woman in this land. It is, therefore, often difficult to isolate the philosophy of the Indians from their way of life as a whole. It is indeed in this very respect that the Indian stands distinguished from other people. For the Indian, philosophy is not merely an intellectual discipline but it is a kind of direct spiritual experience. It is not a system of thought but a system of life, not an idea but a power, not an abstruse theory evolved by a pedant or a *Pandit* but an attitude of mind attained by a *Siddha* or *Yogī*. It has been truly said that, for the Indian, philosophy is not meant merely to be learnt and taught in a classroom but it is meant actually to be lived. This emphasis on the vital connection between philosophy and living is the motive force of all Indian speculation. As a matter of fact, therefore, the word 'philosophy' itself, which etymologically means love of human reason, of judgment and discrimination, cannot be said to be particularly apposite with reference to the Indian outlook. Similarly, we cannot properly speak of a 'system' of Indian philosophy. The word 'system' smacks of a kind of vanity. It presupposes an effort to order or to regulate the facts of Nature. What the Indian aims at is not a systematization based on a mediate knowledge of the facts of Nature. He aims at an immediate vision—*Darśana*—of the ultimate reality underlying those facts of Nature.

This view of philosophy would adequately account for some very significant characteristics of Indian philosophical thought. Firstly, in India, it often becomes difficult to define the borderline between religion and philosophy. Abstract philosophical speculation, unaccompanied by some kind of religious belief and practice, is almost unthinkable. Secondly, Indian philosophy, because it is a life conviction rather than an intellectual proposition, is averse to every kind of inflexible dogmatism. It never attempts to subject one to a course of passive indoctrination. On the contrary, one is left free to find things out for oneself in one's own individual way. For true philosophy, according to the Indian concept, is essentially experimental and empirical. Indian philosophy indeed possesses, in a remarkable degree, the will and ability to allow heterogeneous ways of life and thought to subsist side by side. This attitude of toleration—or, as it is very happily called, this hospitality of the Indian mind—must not, however, be misunderstood as a matter of policy or expediency. It is a principle of spiritual life,—a duty, not a mere concession. Thirdly, Indian philosophers have not elaborated for themselves any rigid and systematic framework of thought. In their search after the ultimate reality they do, no doubt, pass through the stages of

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*Śravaṇa* and *Manana*, wherein scriptural authority and logic respectively play significant role. But the final criterion of validity is neither scriptural authority nor logic; it is life or *Sākṣātkāra*, that is, direct vision or immediate experience of the ultimate reality.

Protagoras, in the 6th century B. C., may be said to have pronounced the motto of the West when he uttered the momentous words, namely, "Man is the measure of all things". He thus started what may be called the anthropocentric tendency, which dominates most of the Western philosophical thought. As against this, Indian philosophy is characterized by its distinctive cosmic outlook. Man, in the eyes of the Indian thinker, is no more than part and parcel of this mighty cosmic whole. He does not enjoy any outstanding predominance in Nature. As the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* puts it: This Ātmā, or the vital essence in man, is the same in the ant, the same in the gnat, the same in the elephant, the same in the three worlds, the same in the whole universe. According to the cosmic speculation of the Indian, which must be clearly distinguished from the anthropocentric canon of the West, man does not stand 'apart' from Nature—he is essentially 'a part' of Nature. Cosmos or Nature, and not man, is, therefore, the starting point of Indian philosophical thought.

And the underlying unity of this vast and variegated Nature is the first cardinal doctrine of Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy, in other words, is essentially monistic. It is reiterated again and again that the ultimate reality behind the diverse forms of the material world is an undivided unity, a single force, which is the very essence of created existence. The faiths of India differ widely—at some points being the very poles asunder. But most of the important Indian thinkers, from the Vedic period onwards, have taught—albeit in different modes of phraseology and through different parables—but the selfsame truth of the ultimate unitary entity which forms the basis of our entire material universe. It may be incidentally pointed out that this monistic view of Nature, which was the result of the insight practised by keenly perceptive and concentrated minds, is now corroborated by actual experiments in a modern laboratory. It is now accepted as a well-proven scientific principle that the inner structure of matter is reducible to a single fundamental substance, an essential and immortal energy, which is the life of the myriad forms that make up our universe.

But Indian philosophy has gone a step further. It makes its second grand assertion, namely, that the tangible objects and tangible creatures in this phenomenal world of ours are but the product of the constructive imagination of man. In a sense, man himself and his doings among his material environments are the finite dreams passing through the mind of an Infinite Dreamer. Nothing can exist independently of the mind of the perceiver, who, on his part, is essentially identical with the Universal Consciousness. The great Buddha said to Mahāmati: "My teaching is based on the recognition that the objective world, like a vision, is a manifestation of the mind itself." And Gauḍapāda, Śankara's teacher's teacher, declared: "This perceived world of duality, characterized by the subject object relation-

ship, is verily an act of the mind. For, duality is never experienced when the mind ceases to act."

Monistic idealism may, thus, be said to represent the quintessence of Indian philosophical thought. This teaching necessarily has certain important repercussions. From the theological point of view, for instance, it makes it unnecessary to posit the existence of any personal god as distinct from the created universe. The Highest Being of the Indian philosophers does not say: "I shall create." It rather says: "I shall become". The manifold material world has no essential reality. It is a mere bundle of names and forms, a fiction, a distorted appearance of the underlying unitary reality caused by nescience. Man too is really not what he appears to be, namely, a physical form endowed with mind. These latter are mutable and perishable. The only immutable reality—the vital essence—in man is the inner soul, the Ātmā. And the Indian philosophers have attained to an absolute kind of monism by declaring that the Ātmā is identical with the Brahma, the World-Soul, which is the Infinite Unity underlying the universe. Man is thus not created by any god. In a sense he *is* God. Godhead is, indeed, his real nature. It is only through the accident of ignorance that man feels divested of his real nature. This is, however, but a temporary phase. The constant quest of an Indian *Sādhaka* or aspirant is to realize his essential identity with the Supreme Soul.

This brings us to one of the most significant characteristics of Indian philosophy, namely, its mysticism. The world-view of the Indian is monistic and mystical as contrasted with the world-view of the West, which is dualistic and doctrinaire. The Indian *Sādhaka* studies the universe to discover whether he can apprehend and become one with the mysterious will, which underlies it. It must be remembered that it is only in mysticism that man realizes spiritual union with Infinite Being and that it is only in spiritual unity with Infinite Being that man can give meaning to his life and find strength to suffer and to act. Mysticism, if rightly understood, is indeed the most perfected form of *Weltanschauung*.

But, as indicated above, Indian philosophy does not stop at merely enunciating a theoretical doctrine. The uniqueness of Indian thought consists in its will and ability to supplement such theoretical enunciation by prescribing some practical method, which would enable the aspirant actually to realize the truth of that doctrine. It is indeed in such a context that the Indian has developed his most remarkable philosophy—the philosophy of Yoga. Yoga presupposes a special kind of askesis of body, mind, and soul, which secures for man a reintegrated personality and which thus enables him to arrive at the much-sought-after spiritual relationship with the Infinite Being to which he belongs as a part of Nature. In Yoga, philosophy and living are inextricably interwoven.

A usual charge against Indian philosophy relates to the slightness and sketchiness of Indian ethics. Indian thinkers, it is suggested, regard ethics just as an 'aside' from the serious business of philosophy—a concession, as it were, to the necessity

of man's contact with the phenomenal world. In view of the fact that the ideal of Indian philosophy is as much to transcend the merely ethical level as to transcend the merely intellectual level, such a charge cannot be said to be altogether unjustified. The holy man in India is very aptly compared to the fair lotus unsullied by the mire on which it grows. Inspite of this, however, the Indian does have something peculiarly his own to contribute to the ethical thought. There is, for instance, that wonderful teaching about the three debts with which every man is said to be born—debt to the Supreme Being, debt to the seers, and debt to his ancestors. Of the first debt man can redeem himself by completely dedicating his life to the service of God and to the proper promotion of the scheme of things as laid down by Him; of the second, by preserving and enriching the cultural heritage handed down to him by the sages of all climes and of all times; and of the third, by procreating good progeny and thereby rendering humanity more human. Then there is the doctrine of *Karma* and rebirth, which teaches that every act produces its natural result in future character and thus discountenances the interference of an overriding providence. The ethical ideals of *Anāsakti-yoga*, that is, renunciation *in* action and not *of* action, and of *Ahiṃsā* or non-violence, which is based on the principle of reverence for life, have dominated the entire national life of modern India. But the Indian has realized that, as in metaphysics so in ethics, what man needs is not the postulation of any elaborate theories, but the inculcation of a proper attitude of mind. It is an inward radiance, and not an external code, which naturally leads to right conduct. Has not Poet Tagore said: "He who wants to do good knocks at the gate; he who loves finds it open ?"

Perfection is the attribute of the Almighty, and yet what a great democrat He is? What an amount of wrong and humbug He suffers on our part! He even suffers us insignificant creatures of His to question His very existence, though He is in every atom about us, around us and within us. But He has reserved to Himself the right of becoming manifest to whomsoever He chooses. He is a Being without hands and feet and other organs, yet he can see Him whom He chooses to reveal Himself.

—Mahatma Gandhi

# Cultural Survival

—By R. R. Diwakar

Only Bhāratīya culture can today boast of a continuous life of thousands of years and a triumphant survival through the ages. It has stood onslaughts from a variety of cultures and yet stood its ground. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Grecian and Roman civilizations had had their day and they perished or changed out of shape, either when invaded by other cultures and civilizations or out of sheer old age. Today we do not come across any representative of these cultures in the streets of Cairo or on the banks of the Euphrates, on the pavements of Athens or on the Via Appia of Rome. There are enough statues and monuments and mausoleums to look at, but there are no living human figures who can call themselves Egyptians or Romans of old and greet us today anywhere in the world.

On the other hand, we find that Bhāratīya culture in its essence is not only surviving but is rejuvenating over again. Everywhere in India, whether it is on the heights of the Himalayas, or on the planes of the Gangā, in the valleys of the Vindhyas or on the banks of Kaveri, we meet men and women who may be said to embody and represent our ancient culture.

Our culture has been multi-sided and many-faced. In every field of human activity, in every art of war as well as of peace, in politics and administration, in music and in literature, in architecture and sculpture, in dancing and painting, our culture has flowered and put forth types which are the admiration of the world.

It is not enough for us today to be merely proud of our heritage. We have to do much more. I may point out especially one thing that we ought to do immediately, and that is finding out the sources of inherent strength in our culture and the reasons for its survival as well as its ever renewing vitality. The results of such a scientific research will be very useful in showing us the direction in which we should proceed in order to strengthen further the roots of our cultural heritage.

In my humble opinion, in times of stress and when overwhelmed, our culture has bent but never broken and has come out successful through all the struggles. It has never tried to be rigid or aggressive or convertive, but has always been adaptive, accommodative, and above all assimilative. This catholicity may be said to be at the very root of its vitality. It is true that in certain aspects it has changed beyond recognition, but in its main outlook and in its stress on the recognition of the spiritual essence of things and of the inner significance of the outward manifestations, it has never changed.

The human being is a composite of the physical, the vital, the mental, the moral and the spiritual forces working within him. The achievement of an absolute harmony of these forces is the very acme of human endeavour. Man's consciousness moves about in all these

planes of existence and in fact is a denizen of these planes. Bhāratīya culture has always emphasized the difference in the values of these various planes and has as often preferred the higher and subtler plane to the one below it. This constant and ceaseless attempt to live in the higher reaches of life is another element that gives this culture the strength to fight and survive.

I have but indicated here the direction in which our research may proceed and I am sure we shall soon be able to probe into the mystery of this mighty stream of Bhāratīya culture and the sources of its undying strength.

# Devotion

By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar

## 1. THE THREE STAGES

Śrī Madhusudana Saraswati has classified Bhakti, Devotion or Surrender to the Lord, under three grades:—

तस्यैवाहं ममैवासौ स एवाहम्—इति त्रिधा ॥

(1) I belong to the Lord

(2) The Lord belongs to me

(3) The Lord is verily myself.

The nearer and nearer we approach the Lord, the higher and higher becomes our approximation to Him and hence these three degrees in order. A boy living in his father's house obediently carries out the dictates of his father. When he grows up and the father notes his good qualities and capacity, he will naturally allow the son to take up the responsibility of carrying on the management of the family affairs and at that stage the son will equally naturally assume that his father will not veto any of his own actions but will approve of them and support them as if they were his own. If the young man gets older still and the father has entire confidence in the capacity of the son to manage the family, the father will gradually cease to take any interest in its affairs and will leave everything in his son's hands so that the son himself will be the virtual head of the family. Have we not come across several instances like this? When the son is in the stage of obedience, he will think "I belong to my father"; when the son is practically in management but thinks of his father as a distinct entity to be ever remembered as the real head of the family, he will think "The father belongs to me." When the sense of duality born of even a theoretical distinction in interests is eradicated and the son is invested with the full powers of the head of the family, he will be justified in thinking "The father is myself." If we transfer these attitudes to the realm of Devotion to God, the first stage of obedience to God gets the name of Karmayoga the Path of Action, the second stage of familiarity with God the name of Bhaktiyoga the Path of Devotion and the third stage of non-difference with God the name of Jñānayoga the Path of Knowledge. Such is the purport of the Śāstras.

In the stage we are at present situated, we cannot claim any competency to say that God belongs to us, much less to say that He is our selves. If therefore we want to enter on the way of approach to

God, we can at the most attempt to place our step on the initial stages of the first stage of Action in obedience to God and there is no use at all in aiming at any higher things. It is this first stage that is referred to by Śrī Śankarāchārya in the stanza:—

सत्यपि भेदापगमे नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम् ।
सामुद्रो हि तरङ्गः क्वचन समुद्रो न तारङ्गः ॥

"Even when there is no distinction between us, O Lord, *I* am Yours and not *You* mine, for the wave is of the ocean and the ocean is never of the wave."

It can be said of the Soul that it is a part of the Lord but in no way can it be postulated of Him that He is a part of the Soul. It may be said generally that the effect is not different from the cause but it can never be said that the cause is not different from the effect. Śrī Vyāsa in his *Brahma-Sūtras* has enunciated that the universe is not distinct from Brahma but has not enunciated the reverse proposition that Brahma is not distinct from the universe. The cause is always more comprehensive and pervades all its effects. The effect is always limited and does not pervade the cause or the other effects of that cause. The effect cannot exist without the cause but the cause can certainly exist without the effect. Similarly with God and the Soul.

Really speaking, the distinction between the Soul and the Lord is not due to any inherent difference in their natures but only due to the attributes which seem to have attached themselves to them. Such attributes responsible for the sense of distinction are known as Upādhis. The Soul is described as having for his Upādhi impure Sattva and the Lord is described as having for His Upādhi Pure Sattva. If the means prescribed in the Śāstras are properly pursued and the impurities of the Upādhi of the Soul are eradicated, the same Upādhi becomes Pure Sattva. Avidyā itself turns into Māyā. There is therefore nothing wrong in saying that the Soul free from all impurities is verily the Lord Himself. But, situated as we are, how can we recognize or realize such an identity when we are equating the Soul with even the grossest encasements like the body and the mind and think of them as ourselves or as belonging to us? When the senses of *I* and *Mine* in the body and other encasements are so firmly rooted in us, even the first stage of realizing that we belong to the Lord is impossible to approach. Only if we begin to learn at least that our bodies etc., do not really belong to us but belong only to the Lord to be ordered about as He likes, will we be competent to place our foot on the first rung of the ladder of Devotion.

We ordinarily are of the opinion that we are Independent and do not depend upon anybody else. A man labours hard to get some money, purchases with it the things necessary for his household and engages a large number of servants to attend to his own needs but even he has very often to wait if his dinner is not ready. When we are unable to have our will even in such small matters, how can we ever boast of any independence? It is pure illusion to think that we are independent, and nothing else. When we daily see that in spite of our longing to have happiness and our longing to avoid misery and in spite of our various and

determined efforts in that direction, we do not have our wishes satisfied, does it not stand to reason that we must come to the only conclusion possible, namely, that we are *not* independent? If we arrive at this stage of concluding that we are not independent, it will necessarily lead us to the further enquiry—On whom are we dependent? This enquiry will tell us that there is some relationship between us and God, that we are not independent but are controlled by Him, that He is the Controller, that He is the Master and we are His servants, that He is the whole and we are His parts, and so on. Our first duty is therefore to train ourselves to realize in actual practice this kind of relationship, namely, of subordination to God. It is this that is mentioned as the first stage of "I belong to Him." It is this that is known as Karmayoga.

## 2. THREE KINDS OF DEVOTION IN ACTION

When engaging ourselves in Action, we must have the thought "This is the command of the Lord. I am His servant. I am bound to carry out His command. I am, therefore, doing this. I have no concern in the result." Considering the possible variations in this thought, the ancients have considered the devotion at this stage as of three kinds known as Tāmasa, Rājasa and Sāttvika. That devotion which makes one believe in God and makes one place offerings at His feet so that one's own enemies may be destroyed is known as Tāmasa. This is certainly not a commendable sort of devotion. If he means praying to God, why not he pray to God to make the enemy a friend and well-disposed towards himself? If he becomes a friend, he will even help him and there will be a distinct gain. Is that not more than enough for him? If the enemy is desired to be crushed as the result of his prayer, that desire itself sullies his own mind. This kind of devotion is therefore considered the lowest and is really contemptible. If one is devoted to God with a view to selfish ends and gain to oneself, that devotion is Rājasa and is known also as Desireful Devotion. This is a very dangerous path. If there is any the slightest non-compliance with any of the details prescribed by the Śāstras, the desired fruit cannot be had. The restrictions are various and numerous. If there happens to be any mistake anywhere, it may lead to quite contrary effect. It is not therefore proper to worship God for having cows, children, wealth or other things of the ordinary world. Even the performance of the sacrificial rites like Jyotiṣṭoma with the desire to attain the happiness of the celestial regions will come only under this second class of Rājasa Bhakti. Even if we get these fruits which we desire, how long will they last? Have they any long lease of life? They are bound to disappear sooner or later. We shall have to be repeatedly praying to God for them. Suppose we do not fight shy of such shameless begging. Have we ever drawn up an exhaustive list of what all we desire to have? Have we ever drawn up an exhaustive list of what all dangers we desire to avoid? Is it possible to prepare such lists from which we can make a selection on occasions?

We must therefore content ourselves with some other method by which we can generally obtain what is good and avoid what is bad. This is the method

of Sāttvika Bhakti. The Lord who is pleased with the Sāttvika Bhakti of the devotee is prepared to show him grace in all matters. A person entering the service of the king may be asked what he wants. If he mentions that he wants such and such a thing or a particular sum of money, he may no doubt get it; but, if he simply answers that he wants only the grace of the king, he will get whatever he requires. Service without a stipulated salary is really the more profitable. If the salaried servant makes any mistake, he will be fined; so will be the devotee engaging himself in Rājasa Bhakti. There will be no such trouble or restriction in the case of the servant who wants but the grace of the king. The king will be pleased with whatever service that servant does. If similarly any devotee serves the Lord without any desire or any eye to profit, he will have no trouble and can ever feel easy. If such a servent who does not expect any remuneration but is still bent upon serving the king happens for some reason or other not to come to the palace, the king will at once depute somebody to ascertain the inconvenience which has prevented him from coming to the palace. If he happens to be unwell, he will send his own royal physicians to attend to him and cure him. If we therefore with selfless devotion worship God according to the method of Sāttvika Bhakti and do not expect any return from Him for our services, we can never be in any want. He takes up the responsibility of attending to all our conveniences. Even if we do not want, He will be ever bent upon our good. The Lord has definitely promised, in His own words as recorded in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that He will secure and safeguard all that is good in the case of those who centre their minds upon Him thinking of nothing else and worship Him without intermittance:—

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

Even an ordinary king of this world attends to the daily needs of his devoted servant, helps him on special occasions of marriage etc. in his family and generally gives him all the support that he needs. What cannot one obtain by serving the very Lord of the universe? Desireless Devotion therefore, that is, Devotion without any expectation of any return and without any selfish tint, is certainly the highest kind of Devotion.

### 3. SELFLESS SERVICE OF THE LORD

There is a great difference between Rājasa Bhakti and Sāttvika Bhakti even at the time of performing the act of worship. In Rājasa Bhakti, there will be restlessness and haste and no peace of mind. The Śāstras may say that going round the sacred Aśwattha tree in the prescribed manner will help barren women bear children, but will it be proper for a woman to feel her abdomen, after going round the tree once, to see if she has become pregnant? The result will appear only in course of time. There is no use in our trying to hasten it. Those who are engaged in Rājasa Bhakti will want their expected fruits immediately and will forget that their worship has to be done carefully and without mental unrest. By not getting the fruits immediately, they will often lapse into lack of faith. They will not have the patience to perform the

activities with the care and exactness required of them by the Śāstras. If any Mantras are taught to them, they will not repeat them with any one-pointedness of mind. They will however begin to say "I have been repeating the Mantra for the last eight days and yet I have not got the promised result." Their mind will be straying away while they are mechanically repeating the Mantra. How can any result ensue ? They will, however, throw the blame on the Mantra and say that it is a useless one. The Śāstras say that that Japa which is done by one whose mind is not focussed is useless: व्यग्रचित्तेन यज्जप्तं तज्जपं निष्फलं भवेत् । If those who resort to Rājasa Bhakti consider well this fact, they can easily realize that the fault is really theirs and not of the Śāstras.

In Sāttvika Bhakti, no effort is ever wasted. Every slightest thing is done out of pure disinterested devotion. No part of it therefore is ever a waste. Even if some error creeps in accidentally, it will not mar the merit of the action. The Lord says in the *Gītā*:—

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

"In this method, nothing begun is ever lost and there is no chance of any evil consequences, even a very small fraction of this Dharma saves one from a great fear."

We must therefore not ask of God anything except His grace; and Sāttvika Bhakti which connotes such an attitude is decidedly the best. It is the most sensible attitude, everything else is included in it and everything can be obtained by it.

In this context it is necessary to sound a warning which must be carefully borne in mind. If anybody thinks "Desireless Action in worship of the Lord is far higher than Desireful Action. All the fruits capable of being obtained by the latter are also obtained by the former. I shall therefore worship God desirelessly", his worship will *not* be desireless. If we properly analyse his mentality, he will be found to have more desire than the desireful devotee. If a servant enters into the service of a master thinking "If I do not stipulate with this master as regards my salary, he will provide for my conveniences far more than what he will do if I stipulate. I shall not therefore enter into any stipulation with him," such a servant is certainly more greedy than one who wants a definite salary. Similarly, if one finding that Desireless Action is more profitable than Desireful Action purports to engage himself in the former, it will not be a desireless action at all. On the other hand, he is really dishonest as he expects to cheat God by posing as desireless. All desire therefore for any fruit other than the grace of God must be scrupulously eschewed.

To deserve the grace of God, we must be free from sin. Even in our daily religious duties we are asked to say that we are performing them so that all the sins incurred by us may be eradicated and so that we may thereby have the grace of God: ममोपात्तसमस्तदुरितक्षयद्वारा परमेश्वरप्रीत्यर्थम् । What more is there to desire than the destruction of our sins and the obtaining of the grace of God? Why should we ask Him to give us this thing and that thing ? It has been recorded in

our ancient books that, when God pleased with several earnest devotees took form and appeared before them and asked them what they wanted, they only asked that, whatever might be the nature of their birth in the future, they must ever have unwavering devotion to His holy feet and that they wanted nothing else.

### 4. THE BEST WORSHIP

Even such a devotion is not for the benefit of God. It is only for us. Our devotion is only intended to secure to us the highest good. God gains nothing by it. In a beautiful stanza in the *Śivānanda-laharī*, the great Master has addressed God as the Protector of Animals and has asked Him to protect well the cow known as Bhakti:—

अमितमुदमृतं मुहुर्दुहन्तीं
विमलभवत्पदगोष्ठमावसन्तीम् ।
सदय पशुपते सुपुण्यपाकां
मम परिपालय भक्तिधेनुमेकाम् ॥

The cows that we keep in our houses may yield about one or two measures of milk in the mornings and evenings. They can never yield an unlimited quantity. They will yield also only at particular times. We cannot attempt to milk them whenever we want. After all, we can get only milk from them, not anything like the ambrosia of ineffable bliss. The shed where the cows are tied will easily get dirty by the accummulation of dirt and refuse and if neglected will become even repulsive. The Cow known as Devotion will be yielding, on the other hand, ever and incessantly and in quantities beyond all measure, the nectar known as Bliss. The peg to which it has to be tied is the holy and ever pure feet of the Lord. An ordinary cow may be available for a price, tens or hundreds of rupees. But this Cow of Devotion cannot be so easily got for money. It can be got only as the result of great merit acquired in the course of several births. It is hardly necessary to emphasize upon the fact that only a person who has a very good store of past good deeds to his credit can ever taste the milk of Joy flowing from this Cow. If such a rare and invaluable cow is obtained by us, it is foolish to think that we have the capacity to tend and protect it properly. Even the function of tying it up properly to the peg, namely, the holy feet of God, must be entrusted to a competent cowherd who will take care of it. The cowherd who has to take up this responsibility of seeing that the Cow does not stray away from the shed and who can properly look after it is God Himself. He gets no benefit by accepting this responsibility. Merciful as He is, He is ever prepared to listen to our prayers and to accept the responsibility of looking after this sacred Cow. If therefore we give up the sense of *I* and *Mine* and leave all responsibility to the Lord, He will certainly look after our welfare. Such an attitude is the highest sign of Devotion. This is Sāttvika Bhakti. The mind getting free from impurities by the practice of Desireless Action and getting stable by the practice of desireless Devotion will have become qualified to receive easily the Knowledge of the Self and the Self will be reflected therein in all its true glory.

# The Vision of Vagisa

*( Continued from the previous number )*

By N. Kanakaraja Iyer, B. O. L.

We have tried to give an imperfect picture of the thoughts contained in the hymn composed by the selfless saint to save the first child of Abbhuti from snake-poison. The inner and mystic meaning of the ten stanzas will have to be learnt only through His grace. It is certain that there is Mantric effect in chanting these verses in their original form with proper music.

On the completion of ten numbers, Tirunavukkarasu—I who was a corpse got up as one who had been sleeping. Abbhuti was amazed at this miracle. He fell prostrate before his idol once again and requested him to go to his house to take the meal which yet awaited him. Vāgīśa returned to the house with the householder and took his meal with all the children and the father, who was not feeling happy over the delay caused in serving the guest. In this company stayed our pure Mahātmā for several days and at last took leave of the family to go on his great pilgrimage. He went by the south bank of the Cavery. After visiting several shrines he came to Tiruvarur.

He was received by the devotee at Tiruvarur with real respect and honour. He went into the temple and had the pleasure and bliss of prostrating before the holy presence there. The hymn that he composed here shows his innermost thoughts. One or two will be given here just for a glimpse:—

"Oh my God of Tiruvarur, I have been meditating upon Your Form all these days only with a view to having real perception of Your divine Self. Now You have entered my mind in Your resplendent form. I have taken firm hold of Your feet. I will not let You out. I challenge You to try to go out of my heart.

"You did not mount on the Airāvata, the celestial elephant, but mounted on a bullock of Your own choice; You did not rule over Amarāvatī but hold sway over Tiruvarur; O Valmīkanātha, my Father, those that are not caught by the grace of Your eyes are really helpless.

"O my mind, if you desire to have a permanent lease of existence, come here. I will tell you the easiest way for the same. Enter the temple of our Lord even before it is sunrise every day, sweep it with a clean broom, pour water and cleanse the precincts, tie beautiful and fragrant garlands, go near Him and pray to Him with all your force, make obeisance with your head to your satisfaction, dance before Him with these words 'Hail Śankara, Jaya, Jaya!' 'Hail Gangādhara, Hail Jaṭādhara, Ādinātha Arura,' and cry in His presence for sheer pleasure and immeasurable Bliss.

"O my mind, if you have a thought of freeing yourself from all the sins that beset you, if you mean going to the Parāgati, wherefrom nobody returns to this world, if you desire to subdue all the Karmas that surround you, I will tell you the surest path you have to take listen to me. Please praise my Lord of Arur in the following manner, 'You

are my relation and real help. I will not think of any God other than You; my Lord of Arur'."

Tirunavukkarasu Nayanar stayed in Tiruvarur for several days and composed many hymns in honour of his Lord, Śrī Valmīkanātha. He had the good fortune to witness the great festival 'Mārgaśīrṣa-Ārdrā'. Then he took leave of the Lord and went on his pilgrimage to other shrines near by. He came to Tiruppukalore and was staying in the Math buildings of Murukanar, a devotee of Lord Śiva.

Śrī Jñānasambandha, who was now a youth of about twelve years, came on his pilgrimage to the same place. Sambandha, the child who was fed by the divine milk on the bank of the tank at Sikazhi, Sambandha who lisped in numbers even from his third year, came to Vāgīśa and requested him to inform him of the pomp and glory of the Ārdrā festival at Tiruvarur. Navukkarasu did the same in a musical hymn. Sambandha found real bliss in hearing the relation from such a great devotee. Then both the saints went to several shrines in company. They and their followers came to Tiruveezhimizhalai.

In a few days a great famine raged in the place owing to failure of rains and withering of all crops. The followers of both the saints were given each a measure of gold coins. With the coins the followers of both the saints were fed sumptuously. Then they started after a few days to Vedāraṇya. In that shrine the doors of the front gate were closed by supernatural influence and left in that condition for many years. A new doorway was opened and the people were using the new one at that time. Sambandha and Vāgīśa on hearing the history of the closure decided to open the frontal before entering the temple precincts. Sambandha requested Vāgīśa to open the door with a hymn. The venerable old saint composed his prayer for opening the door. He began in this vein:—

"Oh my God who has given half of His body to Umā Devī of musical speech, O my Lord of Vedāraṇya, which is circumambulated by all humans, please open Your door so that we may have Your sight."

"Oh my God whose tongue chants the Vedas, my Master who burnt the three fortresses of the Asuras, the oldest Being who wears only a loin-cloth, please open the great door of Your temple."

He sang nine stanzas of this hymn. The God Almighty kept quiet without paying heed to the prayer. Even the Śānta Chitta of Vāgīśa was put out a bit at this irresponsiveness of the All-Merciful Lord. He, therefore, sang the last stanza in a different strain.

"Oh my Lord, who crushed a Rākṣasa with the pressure of a small toe, You are merciless. My Lord of Vedāraṇya, please open the door at once."

The door which had remained closed for many years and which was left in its closed condition by many a devout soul in former days opened now at the prayer of our saintly soul, Vāgīśa. Śrī Jñānasambandha and Vāgīśa entered the temple by this door at once and prayed to Lord Vedāraṇyanātha to their heart's content. Then they returned by the same doorway. Sambandha now took up his part of the prayer. He prayed to the Lord to close the door and allow it to close and open as ordinary doors would do. The prayer was granted even before a single stanza of his hymn was sung. The pure heart of Vāgīśa was pained at this differential treatment even at the hands of the Lord. While he was resting in a Math he had a dream in which his Lord ordered him

to go to Tiruvaymore and know the explanation for such treatment.

The Lord took a human form and walked before the saint leading him on to a temple and disappeared there. Sambandha heard of this news and hastened to the spot at once. He was able to enjoy the divine vision of Naṭarāja in the temple and showed this heavenly sight to Vāgīśa forthwith. The older saint who had complained just a minute before of God's differential treatment burst forth in a beautiful hymn on seeing this vision.

"I saw devotees singing the praises of the Lord Almighty; I saw a great assemblage of Bhaktas; I saw the Bhūtas playing with kettle-drums. I saw the fire in His hand; I saw the Gangā in His matted locks along with serpents. I saw a feather of the crane on His head. I saw the golden flower that is loved by Him. I saw a withered head in His hand. This is how I had the vision of my Lord at Vaymore."

The saint gives a beautiful portrait of the Lord as he saw Him in the ten stanzas of this hymn. Sambandha and Vāgīśa returned to Vedāraṇya. Here they parted company. Sambandha left for Madura at the invitation of Queen Mangaiyarkkarasiyar and the minister, Kulachiraiyar; while Navukkarasu traversed long distances to have Darśana at a shrine hallowed by the memories of many generations of devotees. He came to Tiruvanaikka, Tiruchirappalli and other shrines on the river Cavery. He walked a little more distance and approached Tiruppaignily. On his way he was very much exhausted owing to hunger and thirst. He even fainted on the roadside. No other human being was there to witness his moribund condition. The Karuṇāmūrti who filled his mind and soul took the form of a Brahman, created a cool garden and tank near by and welcomed the famished Mahātmā. The Brahman appeared in the inestimable glory of a Vibhūti-Dāsa with a small bag of sacred ashes in his hand, with Rudrākṣa beads on his chest and with Śivanāma-Japa on his lips. Navukkarasu came near him. The Brahman invited him to a sumptuous dinner from his stock of well-cooked rice and to an invigorating drink from his tank. "This tank water", he said, "is sweeter than nectar, purer than the purest milk and refreshing especially at this time of the day." The saint took the meal thankfully and quenched his thirst. He took rest for a few minutes in that cool garden. Then the Brahman asked him where he was proceeding further. The Mahātmā replied that he was going to Tiruppaignily. The Brahman said that he was also going in that direction and accompanied him. Soon after they reached the temple the Brahman disappeared. Now Vāgīśa was convinced that the Brahman who had succoured him in his dire need was no other than his Lord Maheśwara. His heart, being the real temple for his Lord, did feel real pleasure and bliss in thus having an opportunity of demonstrating to the human world the unbounded grace of Āraṇya-Viṭanka who took His abode in that temple.

Vāgīśa then turned north and came to Tiruvannamalai. He performed Śivakainkarya in this great temple in his own way. His mind then longed to visit more and more temples in the north. He came to Kāñchīpuram and performed his self-imposed duties in the temple for a few days. He then went to the smaller shrines that surround Śrī Kāñchī. Then he went to Tirukkazhukkunram where even today two eagles come in regular intervals to take the offerings of the Lord. From this temple he came to Mylapore and Tiruvottiyur and sang soul-stirring hymns to the

presiding Deity, Śivamūrti. He stayed here for several days, immersed in his Kainkarya. Then he came to Śrī Kālahasti-Kṣetra where Śrī Kaṇṇappadeva, the child of the forest, performed his soulful Pūjā. The hymn that our saint composed in this shrine is full of highest appeal to the human soul.

He left Kālahasti after a few days and travelled further north. He came to Śrīśailam and composed a hymn in honour of Śrīśailanātha. Then his mind longed to have a look at Śrī Kailāsa. He knew that it was a difficult task; but as he had subdued all his senses he felt no pain in traversing the long distance of hilly track. He came to Vārāṇasī after a few months and stayed there for a few days to have the Darśana of Śrī Viśweśwara. He bathed in the purifying waters of the Gaṅgā and performed his self-imposed Kainkarya in the precincts of the temple. He walked bare-footed and in his scanty clothing in the chilly heights of the Himālaya mountain. He cared not for darkness, snowfall or rainfall and was plodding on with one set purpose in view. The heat of the sun was unbearable at certain levels. The cold air was piercing at some other levels. In the dark when this lonely pilgrim was wending his way, wild beasts, serpents and other reptiles did not come near him with their natural tendency. The dark and solitary walk did not raise any fear in his heart, which was full of Śiva, Śiva and Śiva alone. No other thought entered his mind at that time.

The pilgrimage to Śrī Kailāsa is not an easy task even in these days of quick locomotion. There are three or four routes to Śrī Kailāsa; but a man has to exert his utmost to reach the goal, Śrī Kailāsa, the great white hill, which is reflected in that great lake Mansarovar. We are now able to go a long distance in trains and motor transport. We are put to the necessity of walking about two hundred miles only. Even this may be lessened in the coming years with the help of Air Transport. This was not the condition when our forefathers were living thirteen centuries ago. Even in the last century many of our elders have lost their lives in this quest.

Navukkarasu was now to all intents and purposes a child of nature. He had no company before whom he could express his difficulties, nor had he any shrine where he might pour forth his soul-stirring hymns. He took rest only for a few hours in the hottest part of the day and walked, walked and walked throughout the mornings, evenings and nights. His spirit was able to bear the strain, but not the physical body. In a few months he lost the use of his feet and legs. He began to crawl on all fours. His hands also gave way. He then rolled with the help of his feeble body. Bones and sinews did not allow him to move further. But his iron will took him on to a little more distance. After this great feat he was taking rest for a while on the bare rocks of Himāchala.

Kailāsanātha the Almighty saw all this with eyes full of grace. He took the form of a Brahman sage, created a cool tank near by and approached the Bhakta-śikhāmaṇi ( the crest-jewel of devotees ) with a smiling face. On seeing this great sage, Vāgīśa just opened his mouth and expressed his thoughts in a few words,

"O sage," says Vāgīśa, "It is my intention to approach Śrī Kailāsa, and have a Darśana of my Lord Almighty as He is seated on its peak in company with His inseparable Consort." The divine sage replied with a radiant smile, "Is it possible for human beings to reach the Kailāsa? It is impossible even for the Devas to approach the heavenly hill. Why have you persisted in this impossible task and mortified your physical body to such an extent that it now looks more like a corpse than an animate entity. I would advise you now once for all to desist from this purpose and retrace your steps." Vāgīśa raised both his hands in Añjali (a form of salutation) towards the north, where he thought his Lord had His residence, turned towards the sage with humility and said, "Sire, I will not, nay, I dare not, retrace my steps without having feasted my eyes with the vision of my Lord as He seats Himself on the summit of the Kailāsa with Pārvatī Devī."

The divine sage disappeared on hearing this. A voice was heard from the highest heavens. "Rise up, Navukkarasu!" Navukkarasu rose up hale and strong and fell prostrate on the hallowed ground where the sage stood a minute back. He prayed to God that he might be blessed with Kailāsa-Darśana. The voice on high was heard once again. "Navukkarasu, bathe in this tank. You will rise in Tiruvaiyaru in Chola Deśa. There you will have the divine vision as it exists on the summit of Śrī Kailāsa."

Vāgīśa Muni stood up and composed three Padikams then and there. These three Padikams contain real truths about Kailāsa. Present-day pilgrims were really amazed to see the very sights depicted by our saint in these Padikams on the heights and surroundings of the Kailāsa. Vāgīśa did not go to Kailāsa in his physical plane. Even before he bathed in the Himalayan tank by divine behest, he had the beautiful vision by the grace of God, who was all along his guide, companion and friend as well as Jñāna-Guru. After bathing in the waters of this tank and reaching Tiruvaiyaru through divine influence, he had another vision of Kailāsa. The Himalaya vision must be a physical vision of Kailāsa. The vision at Tiruvaiyaru must be the real spiritual vision of Śrī Kailāsa. Hence we have to study both these visions of our Mahātmā with an humble and prayerful approach. Saint Sambandha was instrumental in showing him the first vision at a shrine in Tiruvaymore. The second vision was shown by the Lord God Himself, who appeared before him in human form. The third vision he saw himself without any intermediary.

Vāgīśa, just before he went to Tiruvaymore, had some doubts in his mind. In Vedāraṇya the Lord had not treated both the Bhaktas equally. When he composed his hymn for opening the door the Lord kept quiet till the completion of the whole Padikam to comply with the request of the suppliant. But when Śrī Jñānasambandha began his hymn for closing the door, He closed the door on hearing the very first stanza. This differential treatment was a great puzzle to Vāgīśa. He went to his Math and was thinking over the matter throughout the night without sound sleep. "If God's will be such, who am I to question the justice of the decision?" was the thought that

rose in his mind again and again. Vedāraṇya-Īśwara appeared in a dream before this Bhakta and said, "We will be in Vaymore, come to Us there. Your mental agitation will cool itself after seeing what We have to reveal to you there." On hearing this Navukkarasu got up and started for Vaymore without informing Sambandha of his plans. Ādimūrti walked before the Bhakta as his guide. Vāgīśa tried to overtake his guide several times, but in vain. This was not attributable to his physical weakness or mental weakness, but it was the will of God. The divine guide appeared to be very near the follower at a time and disappeared into a temple that stood on the way. On seeing this the devout Bhakta lost his equanimity of mind. "My Lord God makes a sport of poor me," thought the saint. "He told me in the dream that He would show Himself here and reveal the secret. But He has concealed even the form of the guide that walked before my eyes all these moments. Is it due to the fact that I prayed to Him for opening the door at Vedāraṇya while He was not prepared to reveal Himself? He made me wait till the last moment to allow me into His presence. Even if He is not willing to reveal His form here to me, how can He conceal His vision if and when His beloved Jñānasambandha is here?" Even before he finished this cogitation Sambandha was there. He saw the divine vision first and then showed it to Vāgīśa. In this first vision, Vāgīśa finds expression to depict a faithful picture of the Lord as He revealed Himself then. His mental peace returned without any effort. Sambandha would gladly address the older saint as father. Vāgīśa felt the love of a parent to this child of heaven. No father will feel jealous for a son who steals a march over himself. Sambandha was dedicated to the Lord from his childhood. Hence the Lord God not only gave him the milky Jñāna but took him into His protection. The smallest wish of a child is enough to shake the strong resolve of any father.

In the Himalayan heights Vāgīśa Munīndra was blessed with the second vision. He devotes three Padikams to depict his mental picture here:—

"I pray to Him whom no other being knows, the one who kicked the powerful Yama to save a Bhakta, the one who has taken my mind as a temple, the one who is thunder terrible and lightning brilliant, and the Almighty who takes abode in Śrī Kailāsa."

"I pray to my God, who is standing here without food and sleep, who crushed the king of Lankā with a small toe, who is pleased to hear my musical composition, who entered my mind even before I thought of Him, who stands as the eye for the whole world, and who resides on the Kailāsa mountain."

"I pray to Him who took the form of earth and also the water surrounding it, who has Bhūtas for His battalion, who shines in the pure heart, who has been residing in my heart inseparably, who expounded the Vedas, who was and is bowed to by celestials as their Overlord, who has His neck spotted with dark poison and who resides in Śrī Kailāsa as the Lord of all beings."

"I pray to Him who is the primal Cause, who is three-eyed, and ever young,

who is near to real devotees, who matted locks watered by a great river, who wears bones all over the body, who will never leave my heart, and who is Śrī Kailāsanātha."

"I pray to Him, the great river that rushes in rapids and tries to devour all things that approach it, the great physician who is also the physic to cure all ills of created beings, the light that shines in the heart of really devout souls, the master who takes away all the drawbacks that humans are subject to, the gold that shines here rarely, the entity who is never despised by anyone, the Lord of Śrī Kailāsa."

"I pray to Him who is the ruler of the universe by right, the Amṛta (salvation) of devotees, the swallower of the poison that rose from the milk sea, the one who is real greatness, the one who is pleased to stay in my heart, the one whose vision is next to impossible, the Lord of Śrī Kailāsa."

"I pray to the Lord of the whole world, the master who has Jñāna as His vehicle, the divine brilliance who is all fire, the Lord who takes the whole universe as one meal, and who is unapproachable by all the celestials, the giver of Chakra to Śrī Nārāyaṇa and the ruler of Śrī Kailāsa."

( *To be continued* )

# Efficacy of Prayer

By S. B Kesaviah

"Thou art the father of the world, of the moving and non-moving. Greater than the greatest Thou art the one object of Worship. There is non-equal to Thee in all the worlds. Who, then, can excel Thee, O Thou of incomparable power? ( *Bhagavadgītā* XI. 43 )

"Pray to God morning and evening, and spend the day in thy pursuits."

—Phophet Mohammed.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

—Jesus Christ.

In Kaliyuga all the great teachers have prescribed constant company of holymen and prayer as the means by which ordinary mortals can escape from the entanglements of the world. The company of holymen creates in us an yearning for God. Without this intense desire nothing can be achieved in this spiritual world. Having kindled this yearning the way of fulfilment is by prayer.

Prayer is the communion of the soul with God. It is a longing of the soul for things eternal and divine. It is a confession of the weakness of man striving for greater perfection. It is at the same time a sign of the helplessness of man who is only an instrument in the hands of God who is the real doer. If God is the driver the man is the Chariot, which moves whithersoever the driver wants it to move. Generally prayer is degraded to the low level of a commercial transaction and base materialism such as requesting God to make us rich, give us more profits or

promotions in service. This is not prayer but gross selfishness born out of ignorance.

A true prayer always indicates a firm faith in the presence of God either personal or impersonal, within or without, with form or without form. Faith is the foundation as it were on which the spiritual life rests. A devotee who is assailed by doubts at every stage makes no progress. Faith steers us through the most difficult paths. Service to our fellow beings is the best way to achieve faith and God Himself seeks His seat in the heart of him who serves his fellowmen. A prayerful heart is the vehicle for the soul and service to humanity makes the heart prayerful.

Real prayer is the complete offering of one's body, heart, mind and soul to God. Mere recitation with lips when the heart, mind and the soul are not attuned is not prayer but an empty pretension. Prayer offered thus in unison purifies the person, it removes all evils in us such as lust, anger, greed, etc. and establishes mutual toleration and goodwill. There are moments when we are assailed by doubts, disappointments and darkness. We must cultivate unlimited patience and courage to withstand such moments of depression. A man of prayer knows no retreat or defeat.

Prayer is a solicitation to God in a humble and reverent attitude. It is the yearning of the heart to be one with it's Maker. It is the mental attitude that is important and not the words uttered. The various exercises are intended to sober and humble us to enable us to realize that nothing happens without His will, and we are but clay in the hands of the Divine potter. Duration of the prayer varies from man to man according to the stage of his spiritual development. Prayer should certainly be in one's own tongue. Silent prayer is often more effective than the loud recitations. Prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered.

It is a good plan to begin the day with prayer, so that the Divine may guide us throughout the day. Similarly the day should be closed with prayer so that we can have a peaceful night free from ugly dreams and nightmares.

Too much of rational explanation is the bane of modern civilization. We must begin with a child like simplicity and have implicit faith in God. If I exist God exists. Once we have faith in the existence of God, then arises the necessity of prayer. There are only two aids to those who are faultering in their steps in the path of God-realization—one is constant endeavour and the other is prayer. To one with a prayerful attitude there is no idleness. When we are not actively engaged in a work you can seek union with the divine in prayer. It purifies and strengthens us. Heart-felt prayer steadies one's nerves, humbles one and clearly shows one the next step. Such is the efficacy of prayer.

## Grant this my Prayer !

Grant this my prayer, Lord God of all !—
That on Thy Feet my mind shall dwell;
Let me but speak to voice Thy praise,
With both my hands in worship raised.

Grant this my prayer, God Almighty !—
That with Thy praise my ears be filled;
Let intellect but Thee presage;
Nor eyes see aught but Thy Image.

Grant this my prayer, Giver of Bounty !—
That I Thy Scriptures conning, Thee perceive,
Let me but on Thee contemplate,
And thus achieve the Blessed State.

Regd. No. A. 334.

# The Mirage*

( By Goswami Tulasidas, translated by R. Bharadwaj, M. A., LL. B. )

What shall I say, I know not, Lord!
At sight of wondrous World of Thine
I, lo! but muse and hold my peace.
On Wall of Void, the Formless Art
Has sketched and limned, with colours none,
What gets not washed, effaced or rubbed,
Subject to fear of gloomy Death,
Though awe and pain in him it prompts,
Who comes to glimpse the World, Its form.
In sham stream of solar rays
There lurks a mouthless ghastly shark
To gobble all that moves or not,
But goes to sip those waters false.
One calls it real; another, false;
A third regards it blend of both.
He only knows, says Tulsidas,
The Self, who goes beyond the three
Illusions: true, untrue and mixed.

( The *Vinaya-Patrikā* 111 )

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* The title is the translator's.